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ABSTRACT

Recognition of teachers as professionals can come with increased college preparation, professional participation of all segments of the profession with mutual respect for one another, and a more active voice by the profession in licensing and establishment of standards. Preparation requirements for teachers should be mandated nationally rather than done state by state. These requirements should be supported and recognized by all members of the profession. Another requirement should be that teachers receive their professional preparation at the graduate level, having completed at least 60 hours, including the masters degree. The four year undergraduate program, of the proposed six year preparation, should focus on those arts and science areas which will provide for personal growth and a foundation for the education preparation to come, and establish at least one discipline in depth. The establishment of graduate teacher education schools would call for agreement on a common foundation for all curricula. If colleges of education were accredited by a strong national agency, and the colleges adopted a common body of knowledge, the states would be forced to adopt a common licensing standard. The results would be higher standards for schools of education which would attract better students. (JD)

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IT IS TIME TO CHANGE TEACHER PREPARATION

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If there is one characteristic which has identified our profession of teaching for the past fifty years, it is that we are not recognized as a profession. In the 1980's, as in the past, we have criticism that we have no common professional content for the preparation of teachers, no standards which are widely supported, and, indeed, no need for teachers to receive preparation different from a liberal arts major.

Dozens of national reports criticize the quality of teaching in the schools, the lack of knowledge held by teachers, the lack of basic skills held by teachers. Two of the major reports support the notion that we do not need teacher education curricula for certification. Meanwhile, control of our profession continues to reside in state legislatures through state education departments, and lay boards on the state and local levels.

The fact is that over the past three decades we have had an increasing body of knowledge which we can classify as professional, and which teachers must know in order to teach effectively. The fact is that teachers are far better educated today than even ten years ago. The fact is that teacher preparation has been extended time and again over the past fifty years.

Early in the 1930's, the two year normal school curriculum was extended to three years in many states. After

World War II, the preparation of teachers was extended to a four year college program leading to the bachelor's degree. Many states now require either thirty hours of graduate work beyond the bachelor's degree, or a masters degree in order to teach. While 37% of the teachers held the masters degree in 1975, 50% held that degree in 1980.

In the 1960's, as the profession continued to search for ways to gain respectibility and recognition from the public, we eliminated teachers colleges and colleges of education and established departments of education in colleges of arts and science. Those preparing to teach shared the same general education, the same subject matter majors, the same subject matter minors with the liberal arts majors and minors. The education specialization became a major, or less, within the liberal arts program. Indeed, it has reached the point, in some colleges, where the students who wish to become teachers elect a minor in teacher education.

Other professions do not allow this. Although general education requirements may be shared, the upper two years of an undergraduate degree are designed as pre-law, pre-medicine, pre- denistry, and the like. While future teachers are enrolled in courses designed for business majors or computer science majors, students preparing for other professions enroll in courses which will prepare them for

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their professional goal.

The present preservice preparation of teachers in the United States has a lower proportion of credit hours allocated to the professional studies portion of the curriculum than any other profession or semi-profession. Whereas an elementary education student may take 40 credit hours of preparation, a business major will take closer to 60. A person preparing to be a secondary school teacher will take even fewer credits in education ranging from 18 to 30. Since those credits include a semester of full time student teaching, credits for actual course work are even lower than they appear. The American Bar Association requires three years of professional studies beyond the liberal arts degree; pharmacy, five years, soon to be extended to six, with four of those in professional studies. The Florida barber board requires 1500 hours of barber school before a person may sit for the examination. This is far more than is required in professional studies for secondary school teachers.

No move toward a recognized, respected profession can be made until the manner in which teachers are prepared is changed. It is time to extend the preparation requirements of teachers. And it must be done nationally, as a professional standard, rather than done piecemeal state by state. It must be supported and recognized by all members of

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the profession.

It is recommended that teachers receive their professional preparation on the graduate level. Graduate work of at least sixty hours, including the master degree should be the minimum. Certainly students who will become the change agents, and the leaders among the teachers for the improvement of instruction and curriculum should earn the doctorate.

It is not because of the passage of time since the last major change, that this extension of preparation is called for. Higher degree work in education is demanded because (1) knowledge is expanding at an unmeasureable rate. If a teacher is to challenge a student to "stretch his mind", the teacher must know the depth of a subject sufficiently to direct the student to move on to challenging levels; (2) our knowledge of the process of learning, the function of the human brain, and of human behavior is expanding rapidly. Teachers must know psychology as thoroughly as physicians must know physiology; (3) the amount of credits needed by a student for a broad general education for personal growth, depth in a subject field, depth in education and psychology, and sufficient laboratory and field experiences, including an internship, cannot be squeezed into the present four or five years. If tried, as at present, something has to be watered

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down, de-amphasized, or given short shrift.

Although we would continue to identify those students for teaching who are sensitive to human inter-relationships and who are caring persons, we would also add an additional quality... ability to maintain a grade point average for graduate work.

The four year undergraduate program, of the proposed six year preparation, should focus on those arts and science areas which will first, provide for the personal growth of the student: second, provide those areas which would serve as a foundation for the education preparation to come (a pre-education program, if you will): and third, provide at least one discipline in depth. Secondary education students should be exposed to the arts and to other disciplines beyond the area they will be teaching. For too long, secondary education teachers have had a narrow preparation which did not enable them to help their students to relate the discipline to other fields or to life. The behavioral sciences should be taken as preprequisite to the graduate work in professional studies. Communication skills, group dynamics, growth in self-concept and interpersonal relations should be a part of the undergraduate program.

The fifth and sixth years for teachers would be retained for the professional preparation, and further advanced

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study in a subject field. Here would be found the general and specific education courses needed by the student to understand the teaching process. Focus on the nature of learning and of human behavior would be a must. Laboratory (field) experiences would be offered so that theory and practice could be related. Just as there must be "teaching hospitals", there needs to be "teaching laboratory schools". These schools would exemplify the very best in providing a rich learning environment for children. Unlike former campus schools, which were part of the colleges, these schools can be independently operated, as are their counterparts, the hospitals.

Although at the present time we have no body of knowledge recognized by all facets of our profession, I have a hunch, from reading countless sources over the years, that we have more in common in our preparation of teachers than we admit. Certainly the establishment of graduate teacher education schools would call for agreement of a common foundation for all curricula. Daniel C. Jordon wrote in the September 1979 issue of Journal of Teacher Education that he and his colleagues had been working to build a science of education. Interesting to me, was that his five areas corresponded closely to four areas which my colleagues and I had developed at my college over the past fifteen years. I am

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sure that these areas correspond, similiarly, to your own college's teacher preparation program. The areas include the achievement of learning in five dimensions of human development: psychomotor, perceptual, cognitive, affective, and volitional. This is the learning how to learn part of the curriculum. It is developing the conscious ability to differentiate, integrate, and generalize experience. The second set consists of basic information about the world in which we live; Third is the mastery of three basic symbol systems: language, mathematics, and the arts; fourth, value systems, and fifth, a curriculum of the self..the achievement of self knowledge, the conscious direction of translating one's own potentialities into actuality and their structuring into an integrated value system that which constitutes personal identity. In our own curriculum, we have found this self component to be extremely important for success in teaching.

A.A.C.T.E., of course, is in the process of documenting the essential knowledge base for the preparation of teachers. The thrust by the one organization devoted to teacher education in seeking national agreement on the areas of preparation is commendable.

Whether these areas would become the common curriculum or not is something which would have to be debated. The

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important fact is that we must have an accepted curriculum for the preparation of teachers. Jordan quotes Piaget as complaining: "Not withstanding advances in psychology and sociology, there is no science of education. Why not? There is a science of medicine furnishing doctors with reliable theory and autonomy; but instead of a science of education providing teachers with the theory and autonomy they need, we have government officials and school administrators telling teachers how and what to do."

It is assumed that with a selected college faculty, and with brighter students engaged in graduate work in education, that research will be carried out. These more mature students will be both better prepared to tackle the problems inherent in teaching, and better motivated to search for the answers. The college faculty and the faculties in the participating schools for field experiences, will regard these students as colleagues. A spirit of unity, of one profession, can develop, so that the public school-college separation which now exists, in perception, if not in fact, can be eliminated.

How may this plan be implemented?

It is apparent that we cannot in a short time span move from undergraduate preparation to advanced graduate preparation. But we could gradually increase the requirements in fifteen credit increments, so that by 1990 or

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1995 we could have moved to the sixty graduate hour level. A faster transition can occur if we can have the profession unite behind this change. The N.E.A. and the A.F.T. must support true professional licensing and preparation. At the present time, state education departments jealously guard their right to certify persons who have not followed the accepted, approved programs. Indeed, the reality of today is that it is more important for colleges which prepare teachers to be recognized by their state education departments than to be accredited by NCATE.

The associations of administrators must support this move. Administrators may feel threatened by the fact that teachers will have the same degree of preparation as they. But teachers are the main core of our profession. It is time that teachers had adequate preparation, adequate compensation, and adequate recognition. It is time that teachers have control of the curriculum, quality of instruction, and a voice in who shall enter the profession.

Raising teacher preparation to the graduate level will necessarily reduce the number of colleges who will be eligible to prepare teachers. At the present time, almost every college and university in the country prepares teachers: from the tiny four year school, hanging onto existance by a thread, to the prestiguous university which

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finds a place for an education building on the campus lot. It is time that education come into its own as a prestigous part of higher education. It is time that those colleges and universities which will support and concentrate on professional education be chosen as the select number to prepare education personnel.

A reduced number of institutions for the preparation of educators would mean that education would finally have its own school, with its own reputation to maintain. It would mean an undergraduate curriculum designed for the preparation of teachers, rather than present day curricula in which future teachers take courses better designed for engineers, business managers, or communication majors. It would mean a faculty in the colleges who believe in teaching and research to support teaching, rather than faculty who tolerate education majors in their classes designed for other majors. It would mean liberal arts faculty who can teach and want to teach. It would mean an education faculty who want to teach, research the complex teaching-learning act, and together with their colleagues in the field, suppport the continual development of the best programs for children.

It might even mean that our profession could better control the supply of teachers to equal demand. Rather than the practice of the last half century, which has created

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continual waves of teacher surpluses and shortages, emergency licensing of unqualified personnel, and an uneven supply for selected disciplines and grade levels, a set number of colleges would determine the number needed in the field. With enrollments limited within each college, better qualified students would be attracted to education as a career. Better students demand a challenge. If top quality students know that admission and academic standards are high, they will enter education. Further, such students will be the teacher-leaders needed for the changes in our society which lie ahead.

The colleges and centers of education cannot determine their own curricula in isolation from the rest of the profession. If allowed to do so, the same wide diversity will exist in the preparation which exists now. The national accreditation agency must be strengthened so that there is uniformity in quality throughout the country. Dialogue among all segments of the profession must be held which will result in the development of uniform standards. While these standards will create a floor of quality, they should not be so prescriptive that they prevent the institutions from exploring ways to improve their programs. Schools of education, and the teaching profession must reflect a changing society. The standards of NCATE, as

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suggested by President Flowers in her report, can be revitalized and redesigned.

At the present time, fifty states have fifty sets of regulations for the preparation and licensing of teachers. Although similiarities may be found, there is no national standard. If the proposed colleges of education were accredited by a national agency, and if the colleges adopted a common body of knowledge, as happened in medicine, the states would be forced to adopt a common licensing standard. Although licensing is a state right, and no profession may license itself, licensing standards are established by the respective professions, and education should not be an exception. It is proposed that teacher education councils, now active in some states, be established in all states. These councils, made up of representative public school teachers, public school administrators, college personnel, state education department personnel and union representatives, would advise the legal unit of the state in establishing professional licensing standards. The councils would enable the teaching profession, like other professions to police itself. This suggests that the legislature of each state would need to eliminate many strangling laws now existing, and write new, sweeping ones to encourage the changes in education.

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The teaching occupation, then, needs to move from a union status for teachers, who are more regarded today as blue collar technicians and craftsmen, then teachers, to a professional status with all that it implies. Recognition of teachers as professionals, with accompanying financial rewards can come with increased college preparation, professonal participation of all segments of the profession with mutual respect for one another, and a more active voice by the profession in licensing and establishment of standards, with an accompanying diminishment of the bureaucratic controls of the state education departments.

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